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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY

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TAGS: PREL PHUM UNSC BM

SUBJECT: GAMBARI UPDATES P-3 ON BURMA

REF: USUN 328

Classified By: Ambassador A. Wolff, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The P-3 sought an update April 14 from Special Advisor Gambari on his effort to return to Burma to press for a free and fair referendum (reftel). In a meeting with P-3 Deputy PermReps, Gambari said that as of April 14, the Burmese had not responded to his proposal to travel to Burma or to meet with members of the regime in a third country and seek international observers for the referendum. According to Gambari, Chinese PR Wang has recommended that Beijing push the Burmese to support Gambari's proposal. However, PR Wang also reportedly made clear to Gambari that China would oppose a Presidential Statement (PRST) in the Security Council. Gambari told P-3 DPRs that he would continue to press the Burmese to accept his proposal. In the meantime, Gambari suggested that SYG Ban could convene an urgent Group of Friends meeting and invite Burmese PR Swe to provide a briefing on the referendum and have the opportunity to hear friends' views.

¶2. (C) Amb Wolff reminded Gambari that according to the agreement reached last week Gambari would travel to Burma this week. Amb Wolff further explained that meeting with the regime in a third country would exclude the possibility of meeting with opposition leaders, including Aung Sun Suu Kyi. On Gambari's proposal to host a meeting of the Group of Friends, P-3 DPRs agreed that the proposed meeting would not necessarily be productive as in the past Friends have merely used the forum to reiterate national positions without engaging in genuine dialogue. Amb Wolff reminded Gambari that nearly one month had passed since Gambari briefed the Council and the referendum is now less than one month away. He said that continued arrests and harassment of opposition members in the run-up to the referendum clearly illustrated the need for a Council statement delivered in a timely manner.

¶3. (C) French DPR LaCroix also stressed the importance of a Security Council statement and, noting China's resistance, suggested the possibility of switching formats from a PRST to a press statement, which might be more acceptable to Council members opposing a PRST. UK DPR Pierce proposed that the P-5 meet with Gambari before the end of the week to discuss what can be done to "get traction" with the regime. Amb Wolff told Gambari that absent any indication he would travel to Burma within the next few days, we would circulate the PRST in the Council early next week. Amb Wolff also reminded Gambari of his offer to support the PRST if his proposal failed. Gambari said that he would be willing to support the PRST "quietly."

¶4. (C) In a separate April 14 meeting with Secretary-General Ban, Ambassador Khalilzad urged Ban to call the Chinese and Indonesian Foreign Ministers to support Gambari's proposal.

